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MAY 1920

SUNLIGHT PERSUASIONS

THE FESTIVAL OF THE CORN

(The dance is given on the fête-day of San Domingo. The saint's wooden image having been venerated in the church of the pueblo, the procession now emerges, carrying it into the plaza.)

DANCE, Domingo, dance!
Give him a leaf of corn in his hand;
Rub him with blue corn-juice—
His legs, his hands, his arms.

The black horse and the ochre horse
Were prancing on the front wall
Of the little mission.
The dark red boy sat upon the roof,
Waiting for the first gunshot
To strike the hammer on the bell.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

With ribbons they brought together
The new brides and bridegrooms of the year.

Fantastically they rose from the kiva,
The koshare; with cornhusks on their heads.
Cornhusks of the year that is gone;

Rabbit's fur for girdles;
Orange corn for necklaces.
Turtle-shells, sea-shells, and ox-toes
Made music like juvenile zylophones

In the wind.
Their bodies were naked but for the breech-cloth.

Dance, Domingo, dance!
Give him a leaf of corn in his hand;
Rub him with blue corn-juice—his legs.
His hands, his arms.

They came with the shot of the gun
From the church, bearing Domingo
Under a blue calico canopy:
Priests in robes, acolytes in overalls,
Little red acolytes with bluebottle hair.

From the kiva-side the drums began to beat:
Men of the chorus were gathering.
They sang in unison, resembling old choir-boys
In the organ-loft of the mountain-tops.

One by one the youths of the Domingos

Marsden Hartley

Came up out of the kiva's mouth,
Beautiful as young girls at maypole time;
Their hair combed and oiled with bear's oil
All the way to their waists.

 Jet, with the reflection
Of eagles' eyes upon it;
 Jet, with morning blisses reflected;
Black rivers of young hair, striped with rows of blue corn.

A girl, a boy, a girl, a boy, a girl.
A man, a boy, a man, a boy, a man.
Long lines of wondrous dark flesh
Turning toward the ash-gold dancing-place.

Pom, pom, pom, pom, pom, pom, pom:
The rawhide drum was muttering, as the macaw
Feathers of the ceremonial rod waved
 In the summer wind.

Crimson macaw-tails, and a coyote's skin
Were trembling to the aria of the young corn.

They sat him down, the still Domingo
Of the wooden soul and the stove-pipe halo,
Gilded with store bronze.

 Give him a leaf of corn in his hand—
 Let him dance!
 Dance, Domingo, dance!
 Jesus won't care,
 For a little while.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Up the long plaza step by step, with red-man syncopations
In their ears, their red feet trod the way, coercing

The adolescent corn.

They want the young corn-breasts to fill with young milk;
They want the ear to hang heavy with orange and blue milk.

It is you they are singing for, young corn! It is for you
they are dancing, the red young bodies flushing with an old
flame of the sunset. The red of the west is coming up
out of their loins, up out of their boyish and girlish breast-
flanks. Red sparks are falling from their carved lips.

Dance, Domingo, dance!

Rock the young Jesus to sleep.

Lay him down under a candle.

He'll drowse and fall to dreams with the thud-thud
Of the beautiful red feet on an ash-gold earth.

Green corn-leaves, evergreen leaves, ox-toes, turtle-shells,
sea-shells, and young bells ringing at their knees. There's
the pagan hymn for the ragged Christ-child.

Mary is picking field-flowers on the edge of her blue robe,
behind the adobe wall of the church. Domingo sits under
his calico canopy waiting for oblations. You, lovely red
boy, pick the paint from his cheeks, and let the old smile
through to the sun. The sun will crush his lips. Do-
mingo wants to dance, children of the flaming west.

Domingo opens his wooden eyes.

Marsden Hartley

Beat of the tom-tom in my ears! Thud-thud of multitudinous red feet on my solar plexus! Red fire burning my very eyelids with young red heats! The last saps of the red-man are pouring down my thighs and arms. The young red blood is dripping from the flanks of laughing red bodies aching with the sensuousness of the passing pagan hour.

The blue milk is rising in the cornfields. Can't you hear it rising like new fountains from the old mother breast? Can't you see the little trees of blue milk spreading their branches on the sunlit air?

Sky-blue and corn-blue are mingling
Their kisses like the rainbow edges
Of a whirling spectroscopé.
Blue prisms dangling from red bodies—
Blue corn-juice dripping, drop by drop,
Over the edge of luscious young red lips.

The mother is granting her favors. The father is blessing his corn-children with celestial fermentations. Blue milk is rising from the ground; pouring up through the corn-stalk fountains; dripping from young corn-leaves. Red lips are spreading trumpet-flowers—ready to catch the corn-juice as it falls.

Statures are increasing. The red-man boy is growing an inch taller before my eyes. Something is coming up out of his ruddy breast and thighs and arms.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

Something is reaching out over him.

It is the blue corn-juice

His mother is pouring over him.

Soon—there will be ribbons of new
Marriages stretched in front of the altar rail.

The old choristers are singing
In the organ-loft of the mountain-tops.
All the valleys are in unison with the thud-thud
Of multitudinous red feet.

The Jesus-child is smiling under the candle
At the feet of Domingo of the wooden cheeks.

I saw you dance, Domingo. I saw them rub blue corn-juice
on your legs, and hands, and feet. I saw you step down
from out the candle branches. I saw your heavy feet grow
light when the red boy smiled you away from your calico
canopy.

Dream, little Jesus-child! The sunlight from little candles
helps the pagan dream. The red boy laughs your grief
away—with his young luscious body. The fountain is
filled with the blue juice of the corn.

Domingo nods with heaviness again:
Straighten my stovepipe halo once more;
Take 'up the posts of my calico canopy
Carry me to the altar again—
Back to the Nottingham-lace curtains,
And the blue robes of Mary.

Marsden Hartley

The Jesus-child is waking.

Stick the old pap in his mouth—

The pap with the milk that is grey.

ESPAÑOL

See him pass, Señoritas!

In his eyes are crisp shadows

Of doorways from the Alhambra—

Clipped with sunlight.

Habaneras come from Lillas Pastia's

Tavern, as he saunters by—

From Pastia's window in the moonlight.

I have seen the bull-ring in the pupils

Of his eyes:

Calm cool crowds—women arranging their mantillas,

Throwing kisses to their beloved matador,

Over the ring-side.

I have seen thunder-storms on the hills of Toledo—

Lightning striking the Escorial.

I have seen the fandango, when he smiled.

These are all for you—

Señoritas!